

**State of Connecticut**  
**Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities**



**Regular Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, March 10, 2021**  
**2:00 pm**  
Via Microsoft TEAMS

**Commissioners Present**

Cherron Payne, Chair  
Edward Mambruno, Secretary  
Lisa Giliberto  
Nicholas Kapoor  
Andrew Norton  
Edith Pestana  
Joseph Suggs  
Neeta Vatti

**Staff Present**

Cheryl Sharp, Deputy Director	Charles Krich, Principal Attorney
Michelle Dumas Kueler, HRO Attorney	Neva E. Vigezzi, AA Supervisor
Brian Festa, HRO Attorney	Lynda Rizzo Stowe, Regional Manager
Spencer Hill, HRO Attorney	Shawn Burns, Regional Manager
Monica H. Richardson, Executive Secretary	Jamie Rubin, Regional Manager
Kristen Daniels, Executive Secretary	Gary Madison, AA Reviewer
Emily Melendez, Asst. Attorney General	

**I. Chairperson:** Dr. Cherron Payne, Presiding

The meeting convened at 2:03 p.m.

**II. Secretary:** Edward Mambruno

A motion was made by Commissioner Giliberto to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2021 Regular Commission meeting. Commissioner Vatti seconded it. The vote: Yes (6) No (0), and Abstentions (0). The motion carried.

*\*\*Commissioner Pestana recused herself from this vote regarding the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection AA plan.*

**III. Affirmative Action Recommendations – Vote Required**

Attorney Michelle Dumas Keuler presented the following plan:

Staff Recommendations: **Approval**

1. Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

Representing the agency were Commissioner Katie Dykes, Natalie Braswell, Esq. Chief of Planning, Legal & Regulatory Affairs, Barbara K. Viadella, EEO Manager and Cenit Mirabal, EEO Specialist 1.

The plan was recommended for **Approval**:

The agency did not meet all or substantially meet all its hiring goals at 29%. The promotion goals were met at 21% and the program goals were not established in the prior filing.

The Contract Compliance Set-Aside Program for FY 2019/2020 showed 276.60% achievement for the SBE and 121.10% achievement for the MBE.

The filing history is as follows: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 Approved.

A motion was made by Commissioner Vatti and seconded by Commissioner Kapoor to accept the staff recommendation to **approve** the plan of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and retain annual filing status. The vote: Yes (6), No (0) and Abstentions (1). The motion carried.

*\*\* Chair Payne recused herself from the vote regarding the University of Connecticut and Commissioner Lisa Giliberto proceeded over this agenda item.*

**IV. Contract Compliance, Request for Exemption**

1. KS State Bank, University of Connecticut  
Presented by Attorney Spencer Hill

Representing the Supplier Diversity for UConn were Veronica Cook, MSOM and Amy Horn, IT Contract Specialist and UConn Professor, Sinah Shabazz Muhammedi.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kapoor and seconded by Commissioner Suggs to accept the staff recommendation to grant the exemption to allow the requirements for the proposed contracted five-year lease agreement valued at \$346,000 between KS State Bank and the University of Connecticut be executed. The vote was: Yes (6), No (0) and Abstentions (1). The motion carried.

**V. Request for Reopen**

1. David Wickiser v. EastConn  
CHRO No. 2040234  
Presented by Attorney Brian Festa

A motion was made by Commissioner Kapoor to carry the reopening over to the April meeting due to the parties not being properly noticed. It was seconded by Commissioner Pestana. The vote was: Yes (6), No (0), Abstentions (0). The motion carried.

2. Yarhonda Freeman v. Professional Security Consultants

CHRO No. 2030570  
Presented by Attorney Brian Festa

A motion was made by Commissioner Kapoor to carry the reopening over to the April meeting due to the parties not being properly noticed. It was seconded by Commissioner Pestana. The vote was: Yes (6), No (0), Abstentions (0). The motion carried.

## **VI. Division Reports**

### **1. Executive Director's Report: by Tanya Hughes, Executive Director**

See detailed report.

### **2. Outreach Report: by Cheryl Sharp, Deputy Director**

See detailed report.

### **3. Legislative update: by Darcy Jones Strand**

See detailed report.

Executive Director Tanya Hughes, Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp, and Legislative analyst Darcy Strand were in a legislative meeting in which CHRO was giving testimony and their reports were to be presented by Michelle Dumas Keuler. Chair Payne asked the Commissioners if they had questions for her in lieu of the reports being given at that time.

*\*\*Commissioner Suggs exited the meeting at 2:36 pm.*

## **VII. Executive Session**

*(Requires a two-thirds vote of commissioners present and voting – staff and guests invited to attend must be noted)*

Commissioner Kapoor moved to go into Executive session. Commissioner Giliberto seconded it. The vote was: Yes (5), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The motion carried.

Invited into Executive Session for the first portion with the Commissioners was Attorney Michelle Dumas Kueler and Emily Melendez. Invited into the second portion was AAG Emily Melendez.

Pending Litigation:

### **1. CHRO ex rel. Fair v. Canal Crossing**

CHRO Case No. 2050079, 2050080

Presented by Attorney Michelle Dumas Keuler

2. Wallace v. Sharp, et al.

3. Johnson v. Hughes, et al

4. Mica Notz v. CHRO

Commissioner Norton joined the meeting during Executive Session at 2:55 pm.

### **Return from Executive Session**

Commissioner Giliberto moved to return from Executive session and Commissioner Norton seconded it. The vote was: Yes (5), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The motion carried.

**VIII. Vote on Executive session items: (*Action May Be Required*)**

CHRO ex rel. Fair v. Canal Crossing  
CHRO Case No. 2050079, 2050080

A motion was made by Commissioner Kapoor and seconded by Commissioner Vatti to accept legal counsel's recommendation to file this case in the Superior Court of New Haven and seek injunctive relief, punitive damages, and a civil penalty. The vote was: Yes (5), No (0) and Abstentions (0). The motion carried.

**IX. Old Business**

**X. Adjournment**

A motion was made by Commissioner Norton to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Mambruno seconded it. The vote was: Yes (5), No (0), and Abstentions (0). The vote was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 3:07 p.m.